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## V CORPS TANKER WHO EARNED SILVER STAR FOR HEROISM IN IRAQ SAYS 'FUSS' OVER HIS ACTIONS 'FEELS WEIRD'

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**HEIDELBERG, Germany** — When Spc. Micheaux Sanders joined the Army, all he was looking for was a better start in life.

The 20-year-old North Carolinian, fresh from Army basic training, says he deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 with confidence. He was sure of his training, dedicated to his mission, and he didn't view himself as any different from any of his peers.

He was there to do his job. To be a player on the team.

That all changed when an afternoon mission to aid an infantry patrol quickly turned into a death or life situation for Sanders and his tank mates.

Sanders tank crew and two others from his unit — V Corps' C Company, 2nd Battalion, 37th Armor, 1st Armored Division -- were called to the aid of a 1st Cavalry



SGT CHRISTOPHER STANIS

Spc. Micheaux Sanders of V Corps' Company C, 2nd Battalion, 37th Armor, 1st Armored Division, stands in formation after receiving the Silver Star during the division's welcome home ceremony in Wiesbaden, Germany October 7.

Regiment patrol trapped in an ambush by Iraqi insurgents. As the tankers rolled into the scene, they knew they might be in a serious situation.

"There were blown up Humvees all over, and the infantry guys looked trapped in this one building," said Sanders. "I remember thinking, 'What the hell?!' and double-checking my helmet and body armor."

As the tankers approached, the insurgents opened fire on the trio of M1A1 Abrams tanks.

"They were throwing everything at us," said Sanders. "They were shooting AK-47s, rocket propelled grenades, pistols, shotguns and throwing grenades."

The tankers fired back, but were unfortunately low on ammunition. Because the unit had been scheduled to move, the tanks had been prepared for transport, and were carrying only a minimum load of ammo. The sudden change in mission and unexpected ferocity of the insurgent's attack left Sanders and his fellow Soldiers in dire straits.

"We didn't have much to start with when we rolled out," said Sanders. "We had four drums of 7.62 machine gun ammo; 200 rounds of .50 cal. ammo; two magazines of M16 rifle ammo, and 30 rounds of 9mm pistol ammo."

Sanders says he did his best, standing exposed to the enemy in one of the tank's hatches and firing whatever he or his fellow crewmembers could find.

A round struck Sanders in the arm, slicing straight through his shoulder and out the other side, but he says he barely noticed, waving off the medics who tried to come to his aid.

"I didn't even know I was shot until they told me," said Sanders. "While I was fighting it was bleeding, but I told the doctors to leave me alone. I was busy."

When the bullets ran out, Sanders still wouldn't give up.

"I threw whatever I had at them," he said. "When ran out of bullets, I threw rocks."

Though Sanders insists he was just busy doing his job, his fellow crewmen and superiors saw something more heroic in the specialist's actions that day. As a result he was awarded the Silver Star when the 1st Armored Division was welcomed home to Germany in October.

Looking back now from the safety and relative quiet of his home base in Friedberg, Germany, Sanders reflects on his experiences in Iraq with a shrug.

"I don't feel special. I just did what had to be done," he said.

On the day he and other division Soldiers had their medals pinned to their desert uniforms, crowds and reporters plagued many of the day's medal winners. Sanders stood quietly beside his tank nearby and avoided the publicity. He said it made him feel out of place.

"The medal's cool, but all the fuss feels weird," he said. "I'm in the Army. This is my job."

